



# LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

*A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound*

## CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

Website: <http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net>

**CITIZENS ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
LONG ISLAND SOUND  
STUDY**

**OFFICERS**

Curt Johnson  
*Connecticut CAC Co-Chair*

Nancy Seligson  
*New York CAC Co-Chair*

Martin Garrell  
*Secretary*

**CAC SUBCOMMITTEES:**

Advocacy, Legislative & Policy  
Tracking & Accountability  
Local Government

**LISS WORK GROUPS**

Habitat Restoration  
Stewardship  
Nonpoint Source/Watersheds  
Communications  
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*The CAC meets quarterly on the  
second Thursday of March, June,  
September, and December at  
alternating locations in New  
York and Connecticut. Meetings  
are open to the public.*

### Statement of the Long Island Sound Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

RE: Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning for Long Island Sound  
March 6, 2014

This is a statement of support for the general concept of coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) for Long Island Sound from the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) is one of 28 National Estuary Programs funded by the EPA under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. National Estuary Programs are guided by a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) which for Long Island Sound was approved in 1994. The mission of the Long Island Sound Study and accompanying CCMP is to “work with federal, state, and local partners to restore and protect Long Island Sound.” The CAC provides ongoing advice to the Federal, state, and local government Management Conference partners working on implementing the CCMP. Membership on the CAC includes individuals representing environmental organizations, businesses, industries, local governments, and other public and private organizations in Connecticut and New York.

Long Island Sound is the largest estuary in the Northeast and is crucial to the way of life of more than 20 million people who live within 50 miles of it, generating billions of dollars annually for the regional economy. It’s also a highly productive and important natural system.

Today there are mounting demands for use of the Sound from new energy development to the prospect of underwater tunnels. The character of the Sound could be significantly changed with one major project.

Currently, the states of Connecticut and New York do not have either the authority or an established program to comprehensively plan for multiple future uses of the Sound. Project applicants set the agenda, and state agencies can only engage through the regulatory process in response. This does not allow the states to be proactive in securing the best future for the Sound.

CMSP is a science-based process for inventorying current uses and resources in ocean and coastal waters and using that information to guide new future uses. A plan using this information may identify areas most suitable for various types of activities, such as shipping, energy facilities, recreational and commercial boating and fishing, aquaculture, and others, in order to reduce conflicts among users, minimize environmental impacts, and facilitate compatible uses. This does not mean that such areas are off limits to other uses, rather, that if conflicts arise, there will be a clear indication of what is most appropriate for that area and/or what may be needed to make a proposed use compatible. Typically, many areas remain suitable for a full spectrum of possible uses or a combination of uses. The plan could serve as a guide and inform existing regulatory processes rather than creating new regulations. This would allow the plan to have legal standing without imposing new burdens and undue restrictions.

A Long Island Sound CMSP process can follow this general approach and should make particular provision for close coordination between Connecticut and New York. It is important that the two states engage in marine planning cooperatively to create an integrated bi-state approach. Another critical element of the process is that the public and interested stakeholders play an important part in providing input and being able to assure their interests have been considered and reflected in the outcome. In short, a marine spatial plan should preserve traditional uses like boating and fishing along with the maritime beauty and environmental values that make the Sound a desirable place.

A marine spatial plan would also help reduce conflicts among those who use the Sound and save time and resources otherwise used to resolve conflict. Over the past decade, Long Island Sound has been the focus of several protracted battles over different uses in the Sound. Once completed, the marine spatial plan could be consulted by potential developers to identify more suitable locations for projects and result in a more efficient permitting process.

There have been several coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) efforts in the Northeast in the last few years. These include the Northeast Regional Planning Body being established through the National Ocean Policy with support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC). It also includes the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island who have each completed marine spatial plans in the last several years for their ocean waters. Here in Long Island Sound, there has been an informal working group that has been meeting for a year and a half to enable conditions for Long Island Sound marine spatial planning. These efforts reflect an opportunity for the Sound to benefit from the current concentration in the Northeast of interest and progress, resources and expertise on the subject of CMSP.

The general concept of a Long Island Sound marine spatial plan, by improving management of the Sound and the protection of its habitats, is consistent with and will further the mission of the LISS and accompanying CCMP. More specifically, a marine spatial plan for the Sound would support six program goals of the CCMP, particularly goals 3, 4 and 5 respectively. These are: to ensure that opportunities for water-dependent recreational activities are maximized without a conflict with ecosystem management; to ensure that social and economic benefits associated with the use of the Sound are realized to the fullest extent possible, consistent with social and economic costs, and to: preserve and enhance the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the Sound and the interdependence of its ecosystems.

Finally, The LISS CCMP is being updated for the first time in 20 years and preliminary drafts recommend marine spatial planning among a short list of emerging issues for states to address under the revised CCMP.

By completing a scientifically-based CMSP planning process with strong stakeholder input, we can help assure that uses of the Sound are compatible while also safeguarding the Sound's environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Johnson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Curt Johnson, LISS CAC Co-Chair, CT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Seligson', written in a cursive style.

Nancy Seligson, LISS CAC Co-Chair, NY

